

## Message Text

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46

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-10

NSAE-00 PA-02 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-15 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 DODE-00 NSC-05 EB-07 ERDA-07 OMB-01 SAM-01

/094 W

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R 121916Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5108

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY LISBON

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

USDEL SALT TWO GENEVA

USNMR SHAPE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 29473

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, NATO, MPOL, FR

SUBJECT: GISCARD INTERVIEW: DEFENSE

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REF: PARIS 29339 (NOTAL)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: IN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED BY LE FIGARO NOVEMBER 12, GISCARD EMPHASIZED NEED TO IMPROVE FRANCE'S CONVENTIONAL FORCE POSTURE. FULL TEXT OF INTERVIEW HAS BEEN SENT TO DEPARTMENT BY SEPTEL. THIS CABLE CONTAINS INFORMAL EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF KEY STATEMENTS MADE BY GISCARD ON DEFENSE. END SUMMARY.

2. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION WHETHER HE THOUGHT THAT DEFENSE SHOULD TAKE A LARGER PORTION OF FRENCH GNP, GISCARD RESPONDED ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES: "YES, I WILL NOT CITE NUMBERS BUT I REPLY, YES. WHILE I WAS REVIEWING OUR (DEFENSE) MEANS AS THEY EXISTED (WHEN I BECAME PRESIDENT OF FRANCE) I FOUND A DEFENSE POSTURE THAT PRESENTED THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS: A REMARKABLE EFFORT TO GIVE US MODERN NUCLEAR ARMS, BUT A LOW MORALE SITUATION AMONG MILITARY PERSONNEL ACCOMPANIED BY INSUFFICIENCY AND OBSOLESCENCE OF OUR CONVENTIONAL FORCE POSTURE (APPAREIL DE DEFENSE CLASSIQUE). WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED WITH REGARD TO SSBNS, IRBMS AND THE TOTALITY OF OUR STRATEGIC POSTURE IS REMARKABLE IN LIGHT OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL AND FINANCIAL MEANS OF FRANCE. ON THE OTHER HAND, BECAUSE OF THE SITUATION EXISTING IN THE CONVENTIONAL FORCES, I FOUND A CONSIDERABLE WEAKENING OF THE SPIRIT OF DEFENSE. IT IS NOT IMAGINABLE THAT FRANCE COULD BE CONTENT TO HAVE A STOCKPILE OF SEVERAL MISSILES AND SEVERAL ATOMIC BOMBS. I REFER YOU TO TOLSTOY AND HIS STUDY OF THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN: WITHOUT A SPIRIT OF DEFENSE NOTHING IS OF ANY USE. IT WAS NECESSARY, THEREFORE, TO PUT AN END TO THE UNCERTAINTY THAT CHARACTERIZED THE PERSONNEL WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES: REJUVENATING THE COMMAND, RE-EXAMINING THE MILITARY CONDITION, AND DEVOTING MORE EFFORT TO CONVENTIONAL ARMS, NOTABLY WITH REGARD TO AIRCRAFT AND MEANS OF TRANSPORT. ALL THIS, INEVITABLY, ASSUMES A GROWTH IN DEFENSE EXPENSES. ... WHEN I ARRIVED AT THE ELYSEE, I HAD A FIRST CONVERSATION WITH FRG CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT. HE TOLD ME, "THE THING THAT STRIKES ME MOST IN THE FRENCH SITUATION IS THE WEAKNESS OF ITS CONVENTIONAL DEFENSES." I UNDERSTOOD WHAT THAT MEANT: THE STATE OF WEAKNESS OF

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FRANCE ITSELF. THAT MEANT THAT, WITH REGARD TO INFLUENCE IN EUROPE, THE FACT THAT FRANCE WAS SEEN AS A WEAK

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R 121916Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5109

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

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COUNTRY WITH REGARD TO CONVENTIONAL DEFENSE WAS A FACTOR  
OF OBJECTIVE WEAKNESS. FOR EXAMPLE, IT WOULD BE USEFUL  
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FOR OUR ALLIES TO HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE  
CAPACITY OF THE FRENCH FLEET."

3. WHEN ASKED WHETHER HIS REFERENCE TO THE FRENCH FLEET  
REFERRED TO THE MEDITERRANEAN, GISCARD RESPONDED, "YES,  
PARTICULARLY. THE DECISION THAT I TOOK TO REINFORCE OUR  
FLEET IN THE MEDITERRANEAN BY TRANSFERRING TO TOULON TWO  
AIRCRAFT CARRIERS AND THEIR ESCORTS IS EXPLAINED BY THE  
FACT THAT APART FROM THE AMERICANS AND THE SOVIETS, THERE  
IS NO SUBSTANTIAL NAVAL FORCE IN THAT PART OF THE WORLD.  
CONSEQUENTLY, HOW CAN ONE MAINTAIN THE IDEA OF A MEDI-  
TERRANEAN POLICY, THE IDEA OF MAKING THE MEDITERRANEAN  
INTO A SEA OF PEACE IF, HONESTLY AND OBJECTIVELY, THE  
COUNTRIES BORDERING THE MEDITERRANEAN DO NOT HAVE ANY  
MEANS TO ASSURE THE SECURITY OF THAT ZONE?"

4. ELSEWHERE IN HIS INTERVIEW, GISCARD UNDERLINED  
REPEATEDLY HIS DETERMINATION TO MAINTAIN FRANCE'S  
INDEPENDENCE IN DEFENSE AFFAIRS.

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**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
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**TAGS:** PFOR, MPOL, SOPN, FR, NATO, (GISCARD D'ESTAING, VALERY)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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